

# **CSAP WORKPLACE MANAGED CARE PROJECT**

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA STUDY**

### **MANAGEMENT INTERVIEWS**

*Attitudes Towards Substance Abuse in the Workplace  
and  
Current Practices for Identifying and Referring Suspected Workers*

# **INTRODUCTION**

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention has funded a multi-site study to identify and evaluate strategies to improve substance abuse prevention in the workplace. Prior to the design and implementation of interventions to improve management's effectiveness in dealing with substance abuse in the workplace, the University of Virginia (UVA) examined managers' attitudes toward substance abuse in the workplace and current practices for the identification and referral of workers suspected of substance abuse.

## **PURPOSE**

To examine managers' attitudes toward substance abuse in the workplace and current practices for the identification and referral of workers suspected of substance abuse.

## THE SETTING

The University of Virginia (UVA) is the largest employer in Central Virginia; 19% of the 72,800 nonagricultural wage and salary jobs in the Metropolitan Statistical Area are provided by UVA. The employee population consists of 9,341 faculty and staff and 4,382 wage employees. The employee profile conforms closely to the demographic profile of the Charlottesville/Albemarle County Area. UVA employees come from ten counties and one city. Overall, approximately 60% of the UVA workforce is female; 16.5% is non-white, with the majority of the non-white population being African-American. Approximately 5% have Spanish as a first language; less than 1% of the classified employees at UVA are Asian-American or Native American.

# **IQ HEALTH VIRGINIA**

In 1990, the UVA Health Services Foundation began a university-wide workplace health promotion and disease prevention program, the Institute for Quality Health (IQ Health), as a fringe benefit to individuals and departments funded through the university employees' benefits pool. The Health Enhancement Program (HEP), the Faculty/Employee Assistance Program (FEAP), and Occupational Health Services (OHS) are the primary operating units of IQ Health. A fundamental strength of IQ Health is its health risk appraisal (HRA) which was developed in 1993. The HRA incorporates data relevant to early risk identification, including of substance abuse problems, and primary care.

The FEAP deals directly with employee substance abuse issues. Specific services include training and education of managers regarding the signs and symptoms of substance abuse; employee education about UVA's policy as it relates to the drug free workplace program and the university's standards of conduct; assessment and referral; determination of the level of intensity of care and coordination of services; and case management, including management of re-entry into the workplace.

## **METHODS**

All employees who were classified by UVA as a manager or supervisor were eligible for inclusion in this study. Individuals who agreed to participate were scheduled for a 30-minute structured interview. The interview was designed to assess the general attitudes toward substance abuse, awareness of services offered and frequency of use of these services. Demographic information included gender, type of job, age, ethnicity, and years of employment. Interviews were conducted with managers in both the medical and academic divisions of UVA. All interviews were taped and transcribed. Analysis of the data consisted of descriptive statistics and content analysis.

# RESULTS

A total of 94 interviews, with managers from both the medical and academic divisions, were conducted during the four-month interview period.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF INTERVIEWEES

### < **Gender**

Female	66%
Male	34%

### < **Race**

White	93%
Black	5%
Asian	1%
Other	1%

### < **Age**

Mean = 46 years

### < **Years in Position**

Mean = 5.5 years

### < **Years as Manager**

Mean = 9.7 years

### < **Number of Employees Supervised**

Mean = 27 employees

# RESULTS

## EXPERIENCE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS IN THE WORKPLACE

- 15% of managers have observed problem behaviors in employees who later received a diagnoses of alcohol abuse.
- 10% of managers have observed problem behaviors in employees who later received a diagnoses of legal or prescription drug abuse.
- 4% of managers have observed problem behaviors in employees who later received a diagnoses of illegal drug abuse.
- 13% of managers currently supervise an employee with a medically diagnosed substance abuse problem

# PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

## Effect on the Individual

- Impaired work ability
- Financial consequences
- Family disruption/stress

## Effect on Co-workers

- Emotionally upsetting
- Caused additional workload
- Produced sympathy/feeling of support for individual



# ATTITUDES TOWARD DRUG TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b><i>Pre-Employment</i> drug testing should be mandatory for every job applicant.</b>	16%	22%	10%	30%	22%
<b><i>For-Cause</i> drug testing is perfectly acceptable as long as there is reasonable suspicion.</b>	0%	13%	9%	50%	31%
<b><i>Random</i> drug testing policies should enforced in every department.</b>	27%	40%	13%	16%	4%

## ATTITUDES ABOUT DRUG TESTING

Type of Drug Testing	Positive Reasons	Negative Reasons
Pre-Employment	Safety Image of Institution Screening Tool	Privacy Cost
For-Cause	Safety Confirms Suspicion Helps Employee	Privacy
Random	Safety-sensitive only	Privacy Cost

## SERVICE UTILIZATION

### Institute for Quality Health (IQ Health)

- 88% of managers were aware of the IQ Health services

Faculty/Employee Assistance Program (FEAP)

- ◆ 96% knew of the Faculty/Employee Assistance Program
- ◆ 47% had referred employees to this service

Health Risk Appraisal Service (HRA)

- ◆ 61% knew of the HRA
- ◆ 33% indicated their unit had participated in the HRA
- ◆ 49% had personally participated in the HRA

Occupational Health Service (OHS)

- ◆ 99% knew of the OHS
- ◆ 69% had referred employees to this service
- ◆ 73% had personally used this service

## CONCLUSIONS

- 81% of managers agree with for-cause drug testing.
- 52% agree with mandatory pre-employment drug testing for all employees.
- Only 20% agree with random drug testing.
- For all forms of drug testing, managers expressed concerns about violations of an employee's privacy.
- The cost of drug testing was also a frequently expressed concern.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The level of awareness of the Faculty/Employee Assistance Program and the Occupational Health Program is very high.
- Although the majority of managers are aware of the HRA, the level of awareness was lower than for the other two aspects of IQ Health and therefore can be improved.
- Personal and unit participation in the HRA can be improved.

# IMPLICATIONS

- There is a significant need for education of managers prior to consideration of pre-employment drug testing.
- Interventions to improve awareness and use of IQ Health services need to focus on primary prevention services (HRA and wellness programs) rather than on secondary and tertiary prevention services (FEAP and Occupational Health).
- Communication development between service programs and managers is needed.
- Future interventions should include:
  - ◆ manager training prior to consideration of pre-employment drug testing
  - ◆ communication development
  - ◆ strategies to increase participation in the HRA